

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, independent claim 8 with dependent claims 4-6 and independent claim 9 with dependent claims 2 and 10-12 will be present in the application.

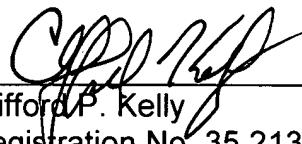
Claims 8 and 9 have been amended to recite that the overflow speeds at the membrane surfaces are in the range of 1 to 5 m/sec, as previously recited in claim 1 which is now canceled. New claims 10-12 are duplicates of claims 4-6, except that claims 10-12 depend from claim 9 and claims 4-6 depend from claim 8. Accordingly, the amendments do not introduce any new matter.

Claims 8-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, on the basis that while the specification is "enabling for creating overflow speeds at the membrane surface in the range of 1 to 5 m/sec, does not reasonably provide enablement for any other range for ensuring good cleaning of the membrane." Claims 8 and 9 have each been amended to recite that the overflow speeds at the membrane surfaces are in the range of 1 to 5 m/sec. The applicant respectfully submits that such amendment overcomes the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Patent Abstracts of Japan, Vol. 18, No. 575, C-1268 (1994) corresponding to Japanese Patent No. 6-210295 in view of the description of such patent on page 2, lines 5-13, of the specification. Claim 1 has been canceled, rendering such rejection moot. Claims 3 and 7 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 8 and 9 have been amended such that they are claims 3 and 7, respectively, rewritten in independent form. Claims 3 and 7 have therefore been canceled. Claims 4-6 have been amended to depend from claim 8 and claim 2 has been amended to depend from claim 9.

In view of the above-directed amendments and the proceeding remarks, prompt and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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